

Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Thomas James and I am a concerned citizen from Danbury, CT.

I am writing you to ask for your support of **Raised Senate Bill 354**, a bill that will create a music therapy license in Connecticut . This bill is important because it will allow Connecticut citizens to more easily access music therapy services, and it will protect the public by ensuring that these services are provided by trained and qualified practitioners.

Please note that my support of licensure for music therapy is dependent on some language changes which have been submitted as written testimony by Jennifer Sokira on behalf of the CT Task Force. These changes ensure that the license is reflective of current board certification requirements in music therapy and is not limiting to the practices of Board Certified Music Therapists currently in CT.

My daughter Charlotte was born at 26 weeks gestation with significant health issues and developmental delays. She has cerebral palsy and is visually impaired. She is now 6 years old, very small and severely underweight and has been receiving music therapy for almost three years. Because of her visual and verbal delays, she has this love of sound and music. She is highly attuned to melodies and rhythms, able to duplicate both. Music therapy has been very beneficial for her development. For instance, singing songs helped her learn to control her voice and speech development. It's also helped her control her mouth and tongue, which has aided in her feeding issues and being able to swallow. Blowing on a harmonica taught her how to purse her lips and suck on a straw. Beating rhythms on a drum have helped improve strength and control for her weakened left hand and arm. Playing a piano and ukelele has helped her with hand writing, finger isolation and hand flexibility and strength. This has been in support of OT and PT. Because of her love of music, we've used that to help her development in so many ways.

We cannot afford to pay out of pocket for music therapy for our daughter. Dealing with DDS and begging for support has been a neverending nightmare. Issues with limited funding and reduced approvals, paperwork that is lost at DDS, constantly changing rules of when you can submit a grant request and what is required for grant closure. It would be far easier if we could include this on Charlotte's IEP and deal with this through the Danbury public school system, as we do for other forms of therapy.

For these reasons, I ask that you please vote "yes" on **Raised Senate Bill 354!**

Sincerely,

Thomas James
7 Delview Drive
Danbury, CT 06811
(203) 449 9809